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OVERSTREET'S COMIC BOOK MARKETPLACE

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Industry Spotlight

CGC 1.8 Superman #1 Hits $64,000

While even many non-collectors are aware of the significant prices paid for *Action Comics* #1, the first appearance of Superman, the same cannot always be said for other early appearances of the Man of Steel. The fact is, though, that rare, vintage high grade material almost always commands attention.

And the rarer things get, the more those who watch the market see that high grades are not always required.

A CGC-certified 1.8 copy of *Superman* #1 sold for a record $64,000 in ComicLink's November-December 2013 Featured Auction. This is not only an all-time public record in grade for this landmark first issue, but also a very sharp increase over the past two sales of this example, the company reported.

"The last two sales for this example were $53,510 in ComicLink's May 2013 auction and $28,000 in September 2010," said Consignment Director Douglas Gillock. "An increase of 120% in three years and a 20% return in just over six months really underscores how active the market is on these major keys and just how aggressive ComicLink bidders can be for top-tier material."

The Grim Game: Not So Grim!

From the master of escape to a modern master of illusion, the original 1919 one-sheet for *The Grim Game*, starring Harry Houdini, sold December 3, 2013 for $67,166, a new auction record for any Houdini poster, either movie or magic. The buyer was modern illusionist David Copperfield.

The linen-backed, 28 1/4" x 41" specimen, one of two styles originally released for the film, came from the noted collection of former movie house owner Charles A. Dyas, who left his posters to his children. It was eventually auctioned off by Bruce Hershenson at Christie's in 1995 for $19,550.

The same poster, 18 years later, was offered by Hershenson's West Plains, Missouri-based eMoviePoster.com during the second session of its five-part December Major Auction.

Rob Liefeld Meets The Deadpools. At 2013's two-day incarnation of the long-running Virginia Comicon, November 23-24, the unquestioned big draw of the show was artist Rob Liefeld, whose line the first day went for six and a half hours non-stop. Rob, whose son, Chase, was in attendance, got together with all of his other "kids," meaning all of the Deadpool cosplayers, for an impromptu family photo shoot.

History, Original Comic Art Overlap

The comic book cover illustration inextricably tied to one of the most calamitous events in our nation's history, artist Curt Swan's original cover art for *Action Comics* #309, was sold by Hake's Americana & Collectibles for $112,015.75 on Thursday, November 21, 2013, one day shy of 50 years since the sad moments of November 22, 1963 in Dallas, Texas. The price includes a 15% buyer's premium.

The piece was the top item in Hake's Auction #210, which garnered the best results in the company's 47-year history and it is the second highest price realized for an item they had offered.

The assassination of President John F. Kennedy by the Marxist Lee Harvey Oswald traumatized the nation, and of course the psychological wounds were still fresh the following week when DC Comics' *Action Comics* #309 hit the stands.

Why the two events are related is something no storyteller could have ever foretold. The cover features Clark Kent seemingly standing right in front of Superman, which is the story's great mystery since the two are one and the same.

In the issue's lead story, Superman revealed his secret identity to President Kennedy in order for JFK to impersonate Clark Kent and help Superman maintain his façade. So "Clark" on the cover is really JFK. The issue was too far along in the distribution channel for DC Comics to recall following the President's death.

SPARTA
ACTION
YELLOW TS
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ACTION COMICS
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NO. 309
STATION WMET-TV HONORING AMERICA'S GREATEST HERO-- SUPERMAN- THE MAN OF STEEL!
ALL MY FRIENDS ARE HERE TO CONGRATULATE ME-- BUT WILL ANYONE GUESS WHO IS THE MAN DISGUISED AS CLARK KENT, MY SECRET IDENTITY?!
Who is the MYSTERY MASQUERADER?
FEATURING ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE "SUPERMAN FAMILY" in... "The SUPERMAN SUPER-SPECTACULAR!"
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Maurice Sendak's Disneyana Collection

The acclaimed, late author Maurice Sendak was best known for his perennially best-selling children's book *Where the Wild Things Are*, first published in 1963, but in collecting circles he was also known for his pronounced soft spot for Disneyana.

In fact, Sendak credited his decision to become an illustrator to watching Walt Disney's film *Fantasia* at the age of twelve. His love of Disney was something Sendak carried with him until his death at the age of 83.

Ted Hake, founder of Hake's Americana & Collectibles, first met Sendak in 1969, while he was in the midst of building a vintage Mickey Mouse collection while at the same time writing and illustrating *In The Night Kitchen*. In addition to purchasing Disneyana from Hake, Sendak was also interested in 1930s advertising buttons, some of which served as the inspiration for the details in his book illustrations and he thanked Hake by designating a building "Hake Coffee" within the pages of *In The Night Kitchen*.

Over the next forty years, Sendak would participate in Hake's auctions and several times a year Hake would visit him to present early 1930s Mickey Mouse objects for his consideration.

Selections from Sendak's Disneyana Collection (as well as other pop culture items) have been sold by Hake's to fund the Maurice Sendak Foundation, which Sendak established before his death. Among the notable first items offered at auction were the only known complete set of Little Nemo character bisques, which sold for $11,479, a rare large Mickey Mouse store display by Old King Cole, which went for $6,734, a rare Mickey Mouse Organ Grinder toy complete with its seldom seen box that realized $27,830, a rare Mickey Mouse Steiff pull toy which brought $10,102, a Mickey Mouse mechanical bank made in Germany by Saalheimer & Strauss that realized an impressive $28,750, and a rare boxed Mickey Mouse Pram wind-up toy which sold for $14,375 while the rare and desirable Mickey Mouse with gun Rosenthal figure brought $6,325.

Snow White Cel Sells for $26,290

Snow White apparently is the fairest of them all. A single production cel set-up of the suspense-filled moment when the Old Hag gingerly passes a rosy – yet poisonous – apple to the fair Snow White in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* sold for $26,290 at Heritage Auctions.

A rare production cel of Geppetto and his "little wooden boy" from *Pinocchio* sold for $17,925, an Eyvind Earle concept painting for *Sleeping Beauty* hit $16,730, and a set of production cels from *Cinderella* realized $16,730 at the same November 2013 event at Heritage's Beverly Hills location.

The auction brought in more than $1.3 million in animation art, drawings and concept sketches for the auction house. The resurgent animation art market continues to attract attention, and the Disney label never seems to hurt.

Gemstone's Mark Huesman (left) with ComicConnect's Rob Reynolds (right).

Release Day for The Guide

Ever since we moved the launch of *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* from April to July each year (it started with #40 in 2010), there's been added excitement – combining both pressure and fun – on Preview Night at Comic-Con International: San Diego. One of the truly fun things about it is that after spending months and months working on it, we actually get to hand it out in person to the Overstreet Advisors and advertisers who arrange for us to bring their copies to them. *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* #44 is due out Wednesday, July 23, 2014.

Milestones Exhibit Showcases African-American Creators

(Left to right) Co-Curator Tatiana El-Khouri, Curator Michael Davis, GEM President Melissa Bowersox, GEM Founder Steve Geppi and Milestone Media Co-Founder Denys Cowan.

Kicking off with an invitation-only celebration, *Milestones: African Americans in Comics, Pop Culture and Beyond* launched at Geppi's Entertainment Museum (GEM) on Friday night, December 13, 2013. The exhibit opened to the public the next morning and is scheduled to run through August 10, 2014.

Milestones, which is curated by Milestone Media's Michael Davis and co-curated by Tatiana EL-Khouri, offers patrons a full spectrum of Black historic contributions made throughout comic book and graphic novel history. The exhibit grew out of initial discussions between GEM President Melissa (Missy) Bowersox and Davis three years earlier. They had lamented together the absence of a force like the late writer-editor Dwayne McDuffie, and together they seized on the idea of *Milestones*.

"When Missy asked me to curate something, the easiest way to go was to do *Milestones* retrospective because Milestone has always been inclusive. I wanted to showcase established African American artists, but also the guys who came before us, including Don McGregor. Don invented *Sabre*, which is one of the premier African American comics, invented by a white guy. African American culture, African American pop culture, African American culture in comics, has had a long influence. I wanted to do something which didn't just focus on Milestone, but focus on where Milestone came from and what came out of Milestone," Davis said.

"I hope to bring attention to just how many and how long African American creators and artists have been making such a huge contribution to pop culture in general, particularly in comics and movies and everything else," Bowersox said. "But I'm also hoping to find some new Dwayne McDuffies in the mix, not just as creators but also as mentors."

For more information about the exhibit, visit milestonestheshow.com or call Geppi's Entertainment Museum at (410) 625-7060. GEM is located at 301 W. Camden Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201 in the historic Camden Station building, immediately adjacent to Oriole Park and directly across the street from the Baltimore Convention Center.

Some of the opening night crowd for the Milestones exhibit.

Steve Geppi's Members-Only Tour at GEM

Geppi's Entertainment Museum founder and Diamond Comic Distributors President and Chief Executive Officer Steve Geppi personally conducted the first ever "members only" private tour of the museum on Sunday, December 15, 2013, capping off a big weekend at the facility. Just two days earlier the Milestones exhibit started with an invitation-only opening, and Saturday evening saw GEM closing a bit early so it could host a private 60th birthday celebration with more than 100 people in attendance.

Cosplay Spotlight: Dead Irons

After percolating for many years – it was huge in manga and anime circles long before the seed took root at traditional comic book shows – cosplay has become a huge component of many conventions in a relatively short period.

While fellow cosplayers and many convention attendees enjoy the cosplayers' efforts, perhaps no one enjoys it more than the people who created the characters in the first place.

Special effects artist Brody Williams turned cosplayers Bryan Treakle and Amber Love into Silas and Annie Belle Irons, respectively, from writer James Kuhoric's acclaimed Dynamite Entertainment mini-series *Dead Irons* at the Virginia Comicon last November.

Kuhoric, the veteran *Army of Darkness*, *Battlestar Galactica* and *Legendary Talespinners* writer, who will also be writing Dynamite's upcoming *Six Million Dollar Man Season Six*, was there to see his characters come to life for a photo shoot for a cover for the upcoming *Dead Irons* sequel in 2014.

"I can't think of a more rewarding situation as a creator than to see your characters made real. The cosplay community is one of the most dedicated groups of fans in all of comics. And to have life breathed into your characters by fans that are moved enough by your creations to make their own homemade costumes is truly humbling," Kuhoric said.

"Brody William's work was phenomenal," he said of the artist who turned cosplayers Bryan Treakle and Amber Love into Silas and Annie Belle Irons, respectively.

"We are talking about a young man that has more talent than many theatrical special effect houses. Over the course of the weeks leading up to the event, Brody talked with me often to get a deeper understanding of the characters in *Dead Irons*. He asked everything about the characters - their history, motivations, mannerisms, and physical description. As he developed his techniques to accomplish the make-ups, he did test shots, gathered costuming, and fabricated props to be used during the photo shoot. When Brody presented the finished effects, I was staring at Silas and Annie Belle brought to life," he said.

HEROES CONVENTION CHARLOTTE 2014

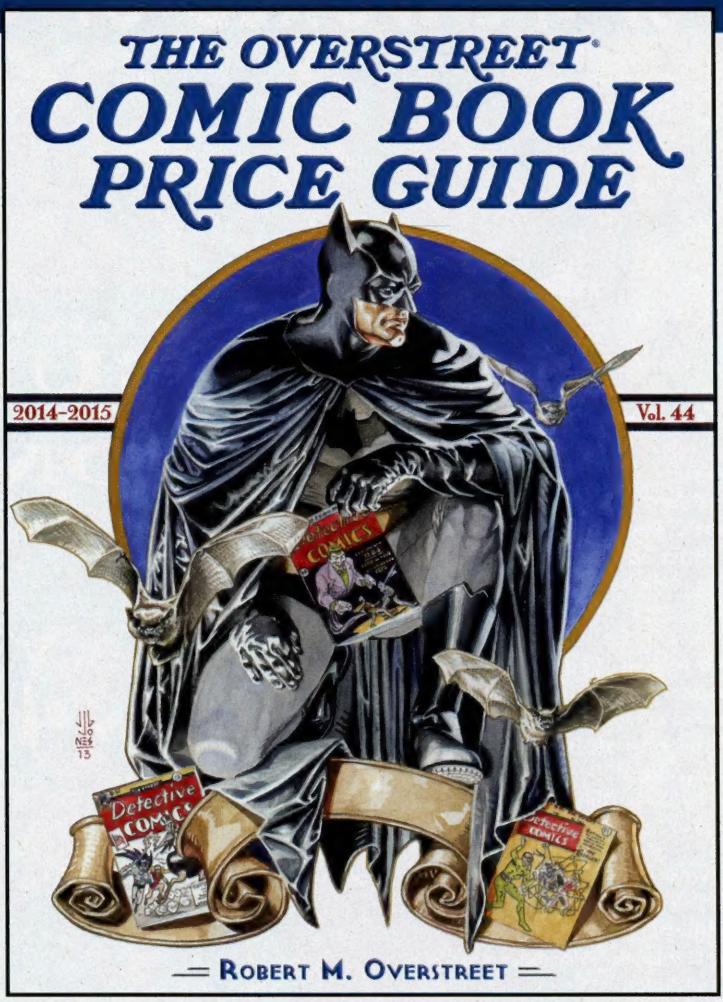
Heroes Convention, or HeroesCon, was founded in 1982 by Shelton Drum, owner of Charlotte's Heroes Aren't Hard To Find comics shop, and since its earliest days it has been regarded as one of the best comic-centric conventions in the country. Where many conventions are comic book shows in name only, that's not the case with this one.

HeroesCon 2014 will be held on June 20-22, 2014 at the Charlotte Convention Center, 501 S. College Street, Charlotte, NC 28202.

Art Adams, Cliff Chiang, Kevin Eastman, Esad Ribic, Don Rosa, Mark Schultz, Mark Waid, and Bernie Wrightson are just a handful of the comic book creators who are scheduled to be in attendance.

Additional information is available on the show's site, www.heroesonline.com.

J.G. Jones Channels J.C. Leyendecker for Overstreet #44



He's been light-hearted and he's been grim. He's had a partner and he's operated solo. He's had about 453 customized cars, all of them cooler than whatever you drive.

This year is the 75th anniversary of Batman. Created by Bob Kane, enhanced by the work of Bill Finger, Jerry Robinson, Dick Sprang, Neal Adams, Jim Aparo, Frank Miller and so many others, Batman long ago transcended comic books, but the character continues to spark comic artists, who in turn spark the rest of the creative world.

What keeps the character compelling to artists today?

"Wow! That's the subject for an entire book," said J.G. Jones, the renowned cover artist for DC, Marvel and other publishers, who illustrated one of the covers for *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* #44, due in stores Wednesday, July 23, 2014.

"I could write an entire essay about this question, but I think some of the things that make Batman so compelling are that he's the ultimate self made man. Sure he's rich, but his body and mind were trained through hard work, focus, and discipline. Those are his super powers, and they are powers that seem accessible to us. He did not arrive on a rocket ship from a dying planet. He was not bitten by a radioactive arachnid. He made himself into the Dark Knight through hard work and force of will. We'd all like to believe that could happen, no? It's the myth Americans tell themselves all the time. Just look at the self help section of any book store," he said. "Or it could just be that he has the coolest costume in comics."

For his cover, Jones drew his inspiration from the work of artist J.C. Leyendecker, who was Norman Rockwell's predecessor as cover artist for *The Saturday Evening Post*. An influential advertising artist as well, Leyendecker's work is still considered highly influential today.

"The idea began to form as I was looking at samples of previous *Guides*, and noticed that the logo type was never standard, but changed, depending on the art. That made me think about one of the longest running standard formats in publishing, *The Saturday Evening Post*. My favorite *Post* artist has always been Leyendecker, so the next thing I know, I'm pulling the huge tome of his work off my bookshelf and getting lost in the cover images," he said.

"Once I decided to do a Leyendecker *Saturday Evening Post* homage, I wanted to stick with one of his recognizable formats: the colored circle behind a figure and the scroll at the bottom, with a white background. The standard sort of Batman squatting on a gargoyle pose seemed to work best in the format," he said.

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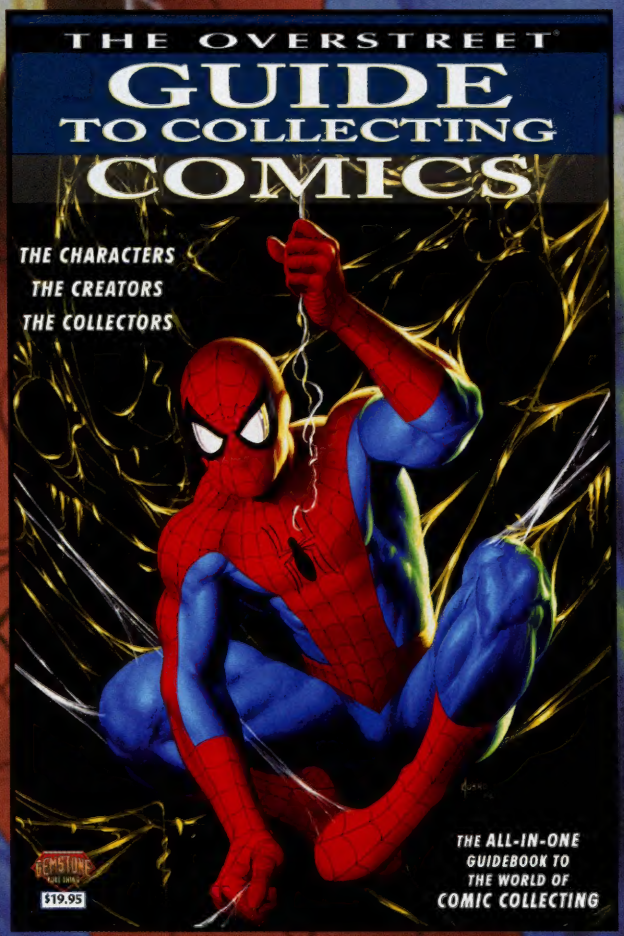

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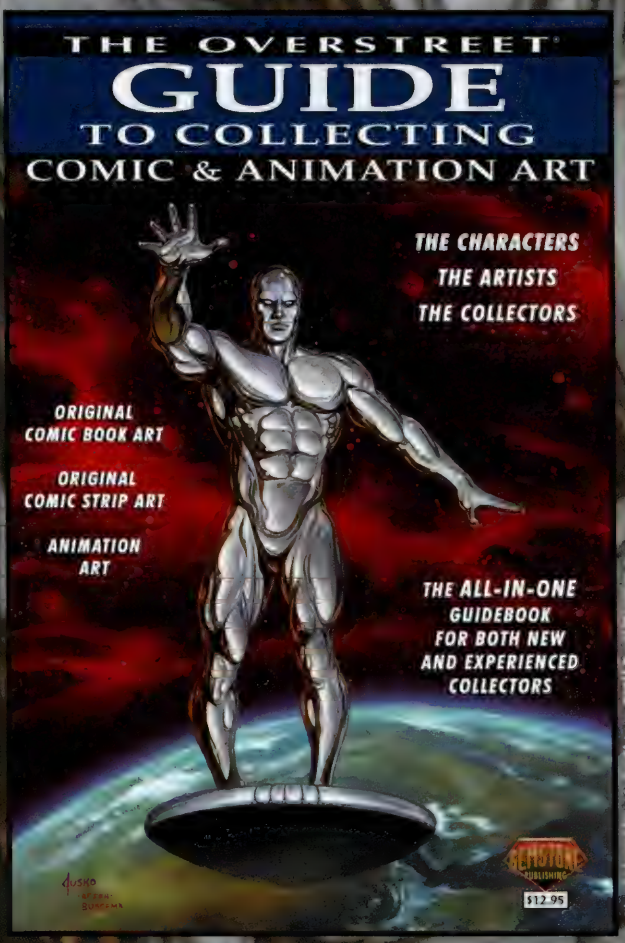

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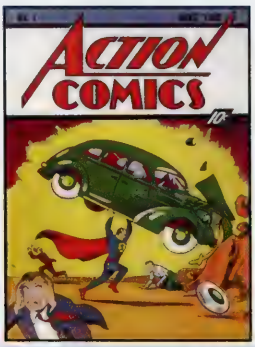
A DECADE OF PRICES: GOLDEN AGE KEYS



Action Comics #1

First appearance of Superman

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$1,900,000
2012	$1,750,000
2011	$1,400,000
2010	$1,200,000
2009	$750,000
2008	$675,000
2007	$600,000
2006	$550,000
2005	$485,000
2004	$440,000

Captain America Comics #1

First appearance of Captain America

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$300,000
2012	$275,000
2011	$240,000
2010	$215,000
2009	$190,000
2008	$175,000
2007	$160,000
2006	$150,000
2005	$140,000
2004	$125,000

Detective Comics #27

First appearance of Batman

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$1,500,000
2012	$1,350,000
2011	$1,200,000
2010	$1,050,000
2009	$575,000
2008	$525,000
2007	$485,000
2006	$450,000
2005	$410,000
2004	$375,000

Marvel Comics #1

First Sub-Mariner and Human Torch

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

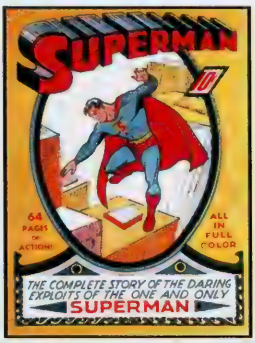
2013	$485,000
2012	$475,000
2011	$460,000
2010	$450,000
2009	$460,000
2008	$440,000
2007	$420,000
2006	$400,000
2005	$365,000
2004	$330,000

Pep Comics #22

First appearance of Archie

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$140,000
2012	$110,000
2011	$70,000
2010	$50,000
2009	$38,000
2008	$33,000
2007	$27,500
2006	$24,000
2005	$22,000
2004	$20,000



Superman #1

Superman's origin

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

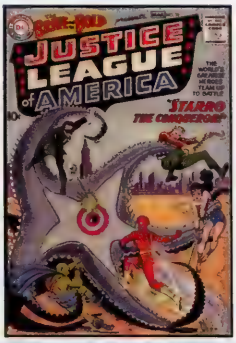
2013	$720,000
2012	$650,000
2011	$560,000
2010	$500,000
2009	$440,000
2008	$400,000
2007	$360,000
2006	$335,000
2005	$300,000
2004	$270,000

Amazing Fantasy #15

First appearance of Spider-Man

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$175,000
2012	$150,000
2011	$125,000
2010	$100,000
2009	$65,000
2008	$50,000
2007	$44,000
2006	$43,000
2005	$42,500
2004	$42,500



Brave and the Bold #28

First Justice League of America

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$26,000
2012	$23,000
2011	$20,000
2010	$16,000
2009	$13,000
2008	$11,500
2007	$10,500
2006	$9,500
2005	$8,800
2004	$8,000

Fantastic Four #1

First appearance of the Fantastic Four

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$105,000
2012	$90,000
2011	$80,000
2010	$70,000
2009	$52,000
2008	$41,000
2007	$37,000
2006	$36,000
2005	$35,000
2004	$34,000

Incredible Hulk #1

First appearance of the Hulk

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$105,000
2012	$90,000
2011	$75,000
2010	$65,000
2009	$40,000
2008	$32,000
2007	$28,500
2006	$26,000
2005	$25,000
2004	$23,000

Showcase #4

First appearance of the Silver Age Flash

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$65,000
2012	$60,000
2011	$56,000
2010	$54,000
2009	$48,000
2008	$45,000
2007	$43,000
2006	$42,500
2005	$42,000
2004	$41,000

Tales of Suspense #39

First appearance of Iron Man

CGC 9.2 (NM-) Prices

2013	$36,000
2012	$32,000
2011	$25,000
2010	$20,000
2009	$15,000
2008	$12,500
2007	$10,500
2006	$9,500
2005	$9,000
2004	$8,000

For the latest prices on these comics – and about 300,000 other issues – check out *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide #44*, on sale Wednesday, July 23, 2014.

The Complicated Origins of The Winter Soldier

By Mark Squirek & J.C. Vaughn

There are some pretty big differences between comic book continuity and comic book-inspired movie continuity. And there are some sizeable discrepancies between comic book story continuity and comic book publishing history, too.

The Winter Soldier, James Buchanan "Bucky" Barnes, one of the most compelling characters in recent years, is at the center of several of those disputed moments.

If you grew up reading comics in the 1960s or later, you more than likely know the first modern appearance of Captain America occurred in *Avengers* #4, which recounted how he survived the machinations of Baron Zemo while his teenage sidekick did not.

It was a great story superbly executed by Stan Lee and Cap co-creator Jack Kirby. Bucky's death became a prime motivator for Cap's early Marvel adventures. Only, it required ignoring many comics that came out after the actual dates of Captain America and Bucky's reported demises.

Captain America Comics was published by Timely, Marvel's predecessor, from 1941 to 1950, and again for three issues in 1954, and in all of them Steve Rogers was Captain America and Bucky Barnes was Bucky. There were no substitutes back then.

But whereas continuity was not the strong suit of the Timely era or the Atlas period that followed, by the time of *Avengers* #4 it was quickly becoming the watchword of the nascent Marvel universe.

Later stories – particularly those in *Captain America* #153-156 and *What If?* #4 – ironed the differences and came up with reasonable stories to explain them away (including having costumed heroes The Spirit of '76 and The Patriot take over for him) during the later stages of the war and after it.

The Captain America and Bucky of the 1950s had been enthusiastic volunteers who later went crazy. That Bucky, Jack Monroe, broken free of suspended animation, had become Nomad, an identity that Steve Rogers once used while not Captain America.

But while that Bucky seemingly came back from the dead, the original could not. Along with Peter Parker's Uncle Ben, Bucky's death was considered one of the few genuinely sacrosanct deaths in comics. Steve Rogers would never forget his partner from World War II, but it seemed the rule would stick.

Decades passed (even in comic book time).

In 2005, the eighth ongoing series featuring Cap

began with *Captain America* #1 (Just for reference, the current "Marvel Now" series *Captain America* is the tenth on-going title to feature the Star Spangled Avenger). Writer Ed Brubaker teamed with artist Steve Epting and later Mike Perkins (as well as others) to tell a pivotal story.

It goes like this:

Inside the borders of what was once Russia, Captain America's oldest enemy, The Red Skull, is looking at weapons being sold by General Lukin. The Skull asks for the price on a weapon and the General tells him it can be his in trade for The Cosmic Cube. The Skull scoffs, claiming he is looking for it himself.

Five years later The Skull stands looking out over Manhattan and we see the Cube has been found. In another part of town, Captain America is thinking of the past as his former lover, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. Sharon Carter, is talking.

She believes that Steve Rogers is taking risks that he doesn't need to, that he is distracted, although she knows the extent to which he is being tormented by memories both true and false.

By the end of chapter one, The Skull lays dead from a sniper's shot and the Cube is gone. The opening salvo of *The Winter Soldier* arc sets the tone for the next twelve issues.

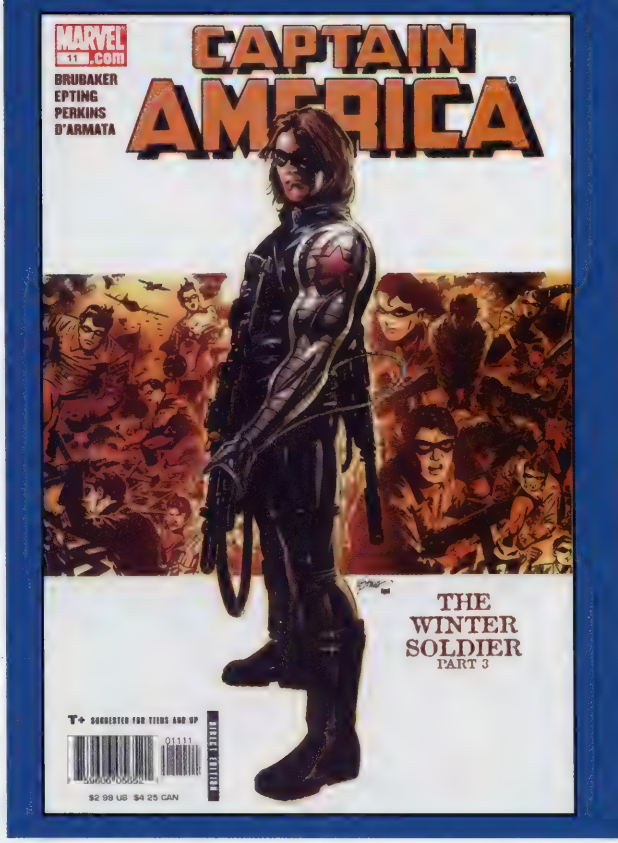
As Cap fights terrorists looking to finish The Skull's plan to bomb major cities, his memories become disjointed. Issue 2 sees a vivid memory of fighting Nazis and cradling Bucky as he dies, but he doesn't believe his own mind.

Something is pulling Cap towards Bucky and the past. Issue 3 sees the return of Jack Monroe, who once filled in as Bucky. Sadly, the chapter closes with Monroe being shot dead.

Visiting the desecrated gravestones of two heroes, The Spirit of '76 and The Patriot, Cap realizes this a message. While talking to Nick Fury, Cap finds a clue in the past, a time when he joined Namor and The Human Torch as The Invaders.

Traveling to Russia to follow that clue, Cap encounters still more confusion as he sees the castle where Bucky died.

A look back at the life of Jack Monroe fills #7 and we find that he carried a terrible weight, and #8 brings the details of Bucky's death into focus.



We learn that spanning the decades of the Cold War, a single Russian operative, one who could walk easily among Americans, has been discovered. The suspect is known only as The Winter Soldier, and wherever he has shown up over that time, someone has died.

Fury believes that this is Bucky.

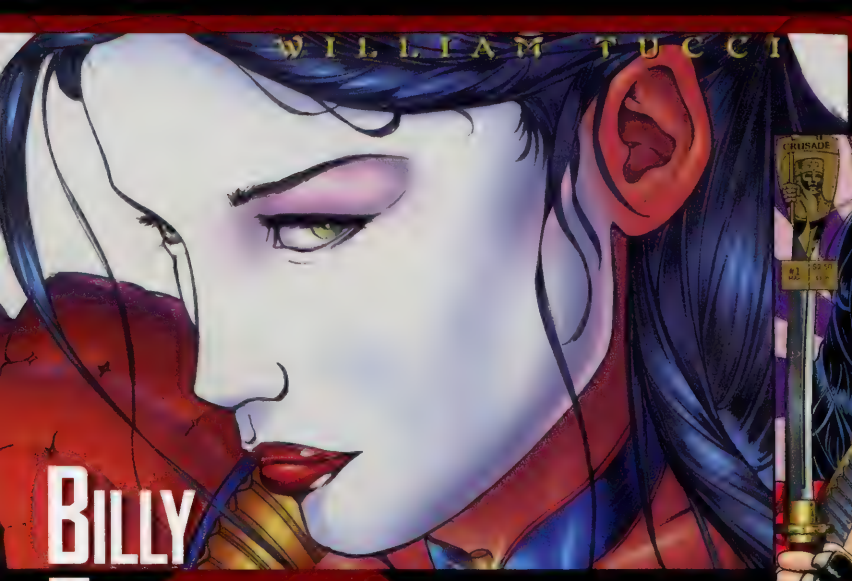
At first Cap cannot believe this is true. Finally encountering irrefutable proof of Bucky's rebirth, the end of #11, finds the hero shattered.

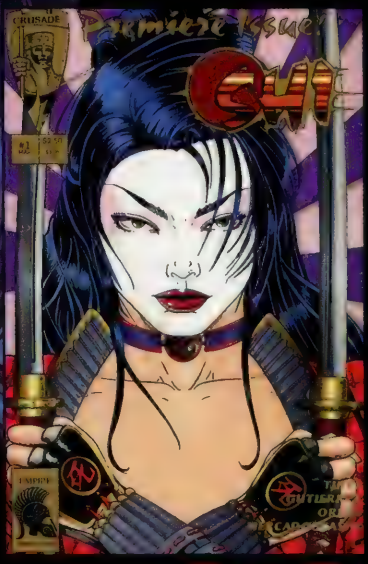
When The Falcon and Iron Man come to his side in #13, the spectacular battle sets the stage for the epic showdown between Bucky and Cap. Discovering the Cosmic Cube laying near him, Bucky grabs it and seemingly sacrifices himself in order to destroy it.

But it's comics, and you know it could never be that easy.

DID YOU KNOW: THE FALCON

After Bucky Barnes, Sam Wilson, The Falcon was the first real partner Captain America had. First seen in *Captain America* #117, he was a street-savvy crime fighter on the neighborhood level. By issue #134 the cover proclaimed a new title: *Captain America & The Falcon.* It would run that way for just about 90 issues. Along the way, readers discovered his true origins, and The Falcon changed costumes, got his famous wings (a gift from Black Panther), discovered his mutant ability to communicate with his bird, Redwing, and found out just what made him tick. The character made his film debut in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier.*





Billy Tucci's Shi Turns 20

"Shi's creation stemmed from a childhood love of samurai films melded with my introduction of Japanese woodblock prints while an illustration major at the Fashion Institute of Technology. The beauty and dynamics of the woodblocks literally changed my life, and started the wheels turning in my head that wouldn't stop for over a decade," said writer-artist Billy Tucci.

These days, at least in some circles, Tucci might be better known as the award-winning writer-artist of the acclaimed *Sgt. Rock: The Lost Battalion*, or his passion project, *A Child Is Born*, but two decades ago he started down this road with the creation of Shi, a female warrior caught between two ancient warring factions, the two disparate directions her family wished for her, and two distinctly different desires of her own heart.

Shi: The Way of The Warrior #1 and the issues that followed sold like crazy in the heady days of the mid-1990s, propelling Tucci into the upper ranks of creator ownership. His imprint, Crusade, published numerous tales of Shi (which is Japanese for "death") and licensed comics for foreign publication as well.

It was the beginning of a long, sometimes circuitous ride that brought him to 2014 and the 20th anniversary of his character.

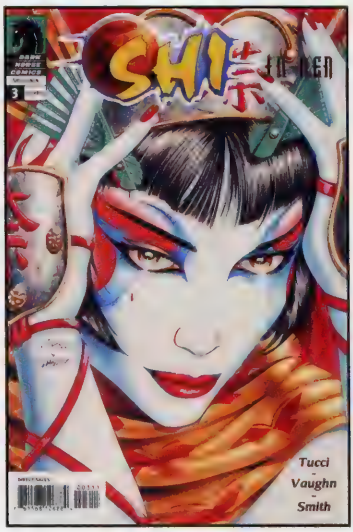
"I conceived the idea of Shi and the lead character in my senior year at school. The character of Ana Ishikawa was actually a male initially, thrust into a "Montegue vs. Capulet" type of war that has been carried over from medieval Japan to the present," he said.

"It wasn't until after college when I was doing freelance t-shirt art and working at Macy's as their children's wear designer that things started to change in both the characters, (the most important being that our lead was now a female), the story and best medium to produce it. My childhood friend, illustrator and designer Barry Orkin, was the one who told me about the Sohei, the warrior monks of ancient Kyoto and Nara that really started things falling in place. It really unlocked an entire universe that was unique and original. It was also around that time that I became convinced that this story should be told not in novel form but rather in comics," he said.

Tucci said he believes the excitement generated by the release of Tim Burton's *Batman* along with the birth of Image Comics and the "Death of Superman" created the perfect pop culture atmosphere into which he launched *Shi: The Way of the Warrior*.

That said, the initial reactions of publishers to a strong, central female character weren't that encouraging.

"When I first put the book together in the form of penciled pages and went out to find a publisher, that's when I ran into a lot of resistance. I remember quite vividly the nice chaps at Triumphant Comics telling me they liked the art, but 'Girl books don't sell.' It was a bit disheartening, but I also got to meet Brian Pulido at Comic Con in San Diego in the summer of '93, and he was very encouraging. He flat out told me to publish this book myself. He's was doing it with *Evil Ernie* and he really provided a lift to my spirits and set me forth to publish a book (even though I had no idea how) myself, the hell with everyone else's opinions," he said.



Tucci persevered through legal, financial and creative hassles to complete the first issue, getting help from his co-writer Peter Gutierrez and the aforementioned Barry Orkin.

"Peter Gutierrez was more than just a writer on the book, he was also a voice of reason and champion of the cause. I also got help from my old friend Barry Orkin, who, after a great lot of the pages were being held hostage by another inker came in and inked the remaining pages with me and actually painted the book by hand – all for nothing until it came out," he said.

"I also had the fortune of a chance meeting with Valiant Comics' Fred Pierce, who put his own reputation on the line and convinced his printer to print my book with a 30-day payment after delivery. This was all wonderful, and yes, I was stunned by how successful the book became, but looking back, I really knew in my heart that there was something special about Shi; I just had no idea of an impact Ana Ishikawa would have on the comics and pop culture scene," he said.

Tucci completed *Shi: The Way of the Warrior* and teamed with writer Gary Cohn for *Shi: Senryaku,* which featured Ana's early life told through montages that mirrored the great events in history as portrayed by some of the best artists in the industry including Jim Lee, Joe Quesada, Jeff Smith, Jae Lee, Amanda Conner, Terry Moore, Stan Sakai, George Pérez, and Joe Jusko, among others.

Following them, he produced a series of mini-series and one-shots chronicling the character's adventures, ending with 2005's *Shi: Ju-Nen,* published by Dark Horse. The story left off with Ana in Japan, seemingly headed back to her life in New York. It also left off with Tucci's attention turning toward other projects.

"*Shi* has always been about the story, and after 10 years and about 100 issues I was really quite burned out and needed a break after," he said.

Tucci said the two decades that have passed for readers since his first issue hit comic shops have also passed for the character. He contemplated bringing the character back as she was originally, but decided against it when he considered his own experiences over the past 20 years.

"We'll see Ana in a whole different light, a woman who as a child herself was drafted into a violent, shadow war that has existed since antiquity, who must fight not only for her own life but that of her family. It's going to be great as we'll be bringing back all the major characters of our universe to bring an incredibly fresh, exciting and original story," he said.

As we go to press, Tucci plans to release his new Shi graphic novel in Summer 2014.

DID YOU KNOW: THE SILVER SURFER

The Silver Surfer first appeared in March 1966's *Fantastic Four* #48, written by Stan Lee and penciled by Jack Kirby. They again examined the character's creation in 1978 in the first Marvel graphic novel, one not even published by Marvel itself. *The Silver Surfer,* by Lee, Kirby and inker Joe Sinnott, was published by Simon & Schuster's Fireside Books imprint. It remains a sleeper in comic book collecting, but not so for comic art fans. ComicLink sold page 6 of the story (page 20 in the published version, following the book's text front matter), in Fall 2013 for $25,250.

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THE MIGHTY CRUSADERS

A Super-Heroic Timeline

By Paul Castiglia

In 1939, MLJ publishers Morris Coyne, Louis Silberkleit and John Goldwater, whose first-name initials gave the company its name, decided to expand beyond the pulp magazines that had made their reputation. Comics writer and historian Paul Castliglia takes us on a quick trip between those early days and today's superheroes from Archie Comic Publications.

1939: In the wake of Superman's massive success, pulp magazine publisher MLJ switches to comics and introduces its own classic Golden Age heroes including the Shield (the first-ever patriotic hero, predating Captain America), Steel Sterling, The Black Hood, The Hangman, The Comet and more.

Late 1950s/early 1960s: After a drop in superhero sales the previous decade, both DC and Marvel revitalize and reinvent superheroes for a new "Silver Age." Archie also decides to give superheroes another shot and launches the "Archie Adventure Series" imprint, featuring The Fly and The Jaguar. The new heroes are soon joined by revised versions of the classic Golden Age MLJ characters.

1965: Archie once again takes note of their competitors' success with super teams like the Avengers and the Justice League and creates a super-team of its own: The Mighty Crusaders! Culled from the large stable of MLJ/Archie heroes, the new team is published under the Mighty Comics banner.

The early 1980s: As the direct sales market of comic book specialty shops expands, the Mighty Crusaders return under the Red Circle imprint in a series of comics created exclusively for comic shops.

1990s: The boost of popularity superhero comics receive this decade enables Archie to broker an unusual-for-the-time deal: licensing the characters to DC Comics for their short-lived Impact series of comics.

The Millennium: The Mighty Crusaders rights revert back to Archie and the heroes make guest appearances in *Archie's Weird Mysteries*, *Sabrina* and *Katy Keene* stories.

Late 2000s: DC comes calling again and this time integrates the Mighty Crusaders characters into DC Comics continuity.

2012: The characters return home to Archie to appear in a revived Red Circle imprint as The New Crusaders, including such spin-off series as *The Fox: Freak Magnet.*

Paul Castiglia is a veteran comics writer, editor and historian who has worked for Archie, DC, Dark Horse and others. He is responsible for researching and editing the Archie Americana Series of classic reprints, as well as archive collections of Shield, Fly and Mighty Crusaders comics.

DID YOU KNOW: SECRET AGENT X-9

Written by Dashiell Hammett (*The Maltese Falcon*) and drawn by *Flash Gordon* artist Alex Raymond, *Secret Agent X-9* was introduced by King Features in January 1934. X-9 is a loner who fights urban criminals by seeming to become part of their evil world. Hammett and Raymond each soon went on to other things in 1935, and the strip was continued by an assortment of writers and artists. It evolved into *Secret Agent Corrigan* in 1967 and was taken over by writer Archie Goodwin and artist Al Williamson, who would later collaborate on the *Star Wars* newspaper strip as well.

Reprints of the first eight months of the strip were published in 1934. There was a short-lived radio program, and Universal Pictures made two *Secret Agent X-9* serials, one in 1937 starring Scott Kolk, the other in 1945 starring Lloyd Bridges. The complete run of *Secret Agent Corrigan* strips by Goodwin and Williamson have been collected in five hardcover volumes by IDW Publishing's Library of American Comics imprint.

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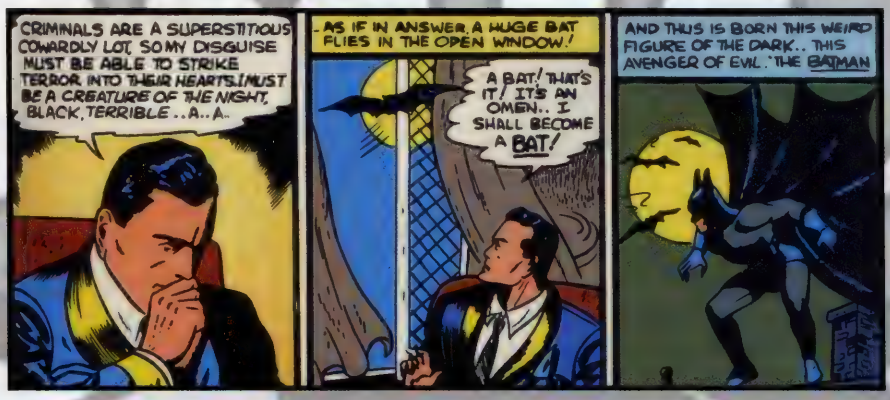
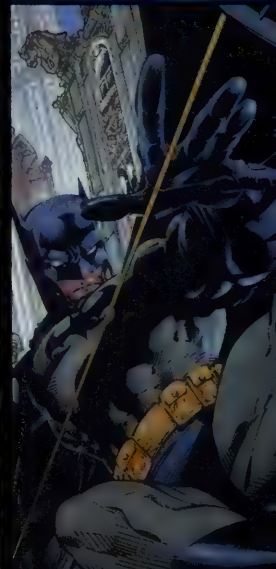

CRIMINALS ARE A SUPERSTITIOUS COWARDLY LOT, SO MY DISGUISE MUST BE ABLE TO STRIKE TERROR INTO THEIR HEARTS! MUST BE A CREATURE OF THE NIGHT, BLACK, TERRIBLE.. A.. A..
AS IF IN ANSWER, A HUGE BAT FLIES IN THE OPEN WINDOW!
A BAT! THAT'S IT! IT'S AN OMEN.. I SHALL BECOME A BAT!
AND THUS IS BORN THIS WEIRD FIGURE OF THE DARK.. THIS AVENGER OF EVIL.. THE BATMAN

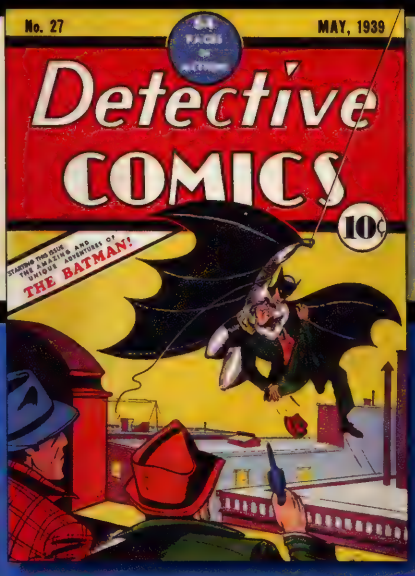
1939 2014

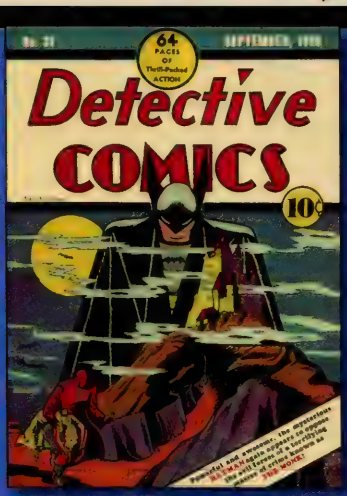
75 YEARS OF THE BATMAN

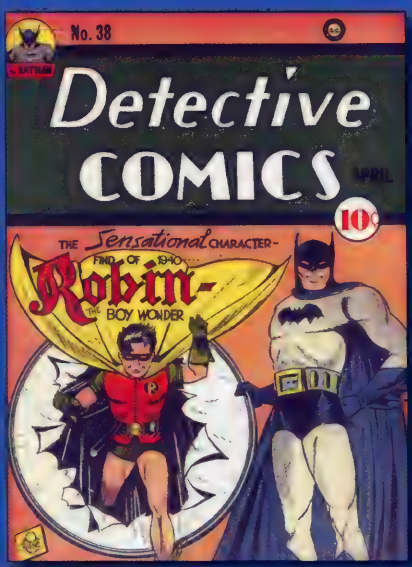


On the 75th anniversary of his *Detective Comics* #27 debut, we look back at the many eras of the Batman, from the fearsome Dark Knight who preys on criminals from the shadows, to the campy Caped Crusader who battles crime in the daylight with a smile on his face, and those versions somewhere in between.

THE GOLDEN AGE







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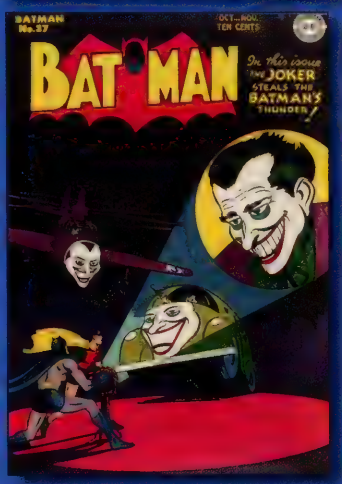

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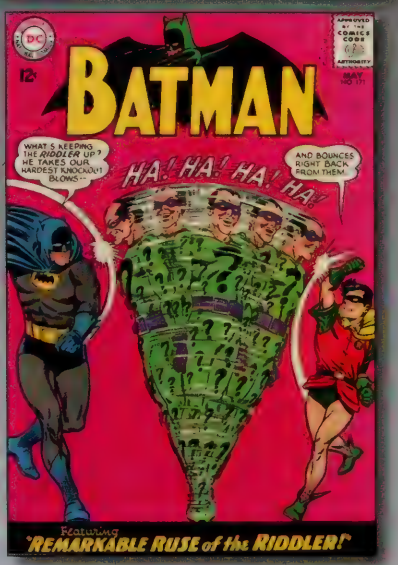
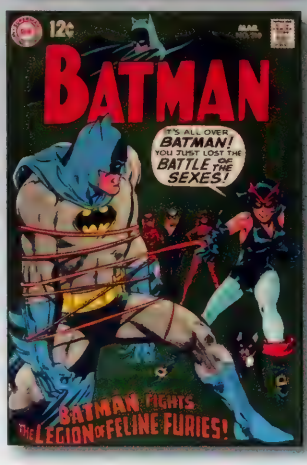
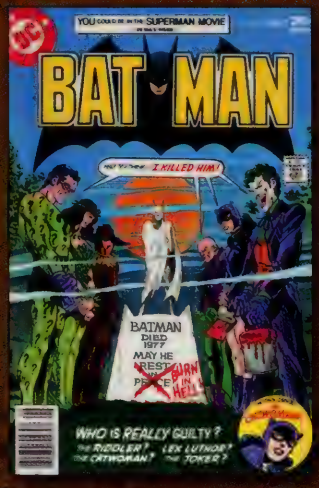
BATMAN! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I--I GUESS SO! TH-THE LAST THING I REMEMBER IS THE EXPLOSION...
BATMAN--YOUR MASK! QUICK--TAKE IT OFF!
THE ELONGATED MAN!

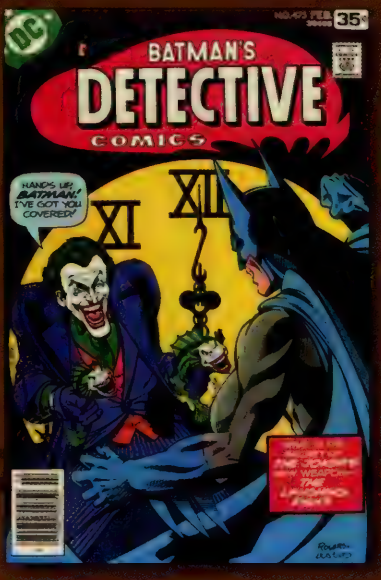

BATMAN
WHAT'S KEEPING THE ANGLER UP? HE TAKES OUR HARDEST KNOCKOUT BLOWS--
HA! HA! HA! HA!
AND BOUNCES RIGHT BACK FROM THEM
featuring "REMARKABLE RUSE of the RIDDLER!"

BATMAN
HOT-LINE CALL BATMAN! LET'S GET GOING!
NOT TONIGHT, KID! I'M STAYING IN THE BATCAVE TO WATCH MYSELF ON TELEVISION!
THE ADVENTURES OF BAT MAN
HOLY EMERGENCY!
WHAT'S THE REAL REASON BATMAN'S GOOFING OFF?
THE TELLTALE CLUE IS ON THIS COVER!

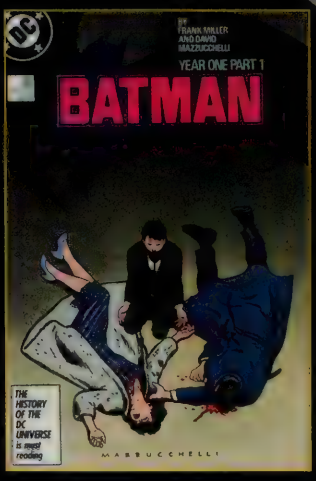


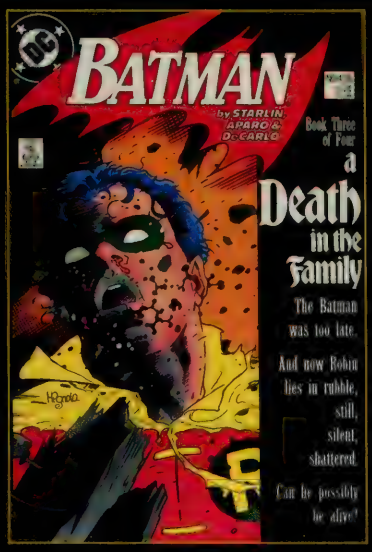
THE BRONZE AGE

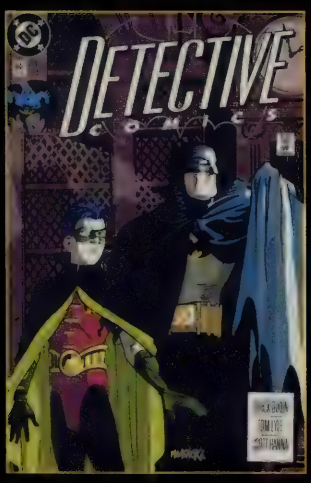

DC
YOU COULD BE IN THE SUPERMAN MOVIE
BAT MAN
I KILLED HIM!
BATMAN DIED 1977 MAY HE REST IN PEACE
WHO IS REALLY GUILTY?
THE RIDDLER? LEX LUTHOR? THE CATWOMAN? THE JOKER?

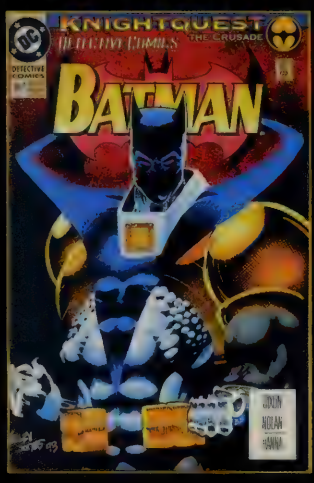


THE DARK KNIGHT YEARS

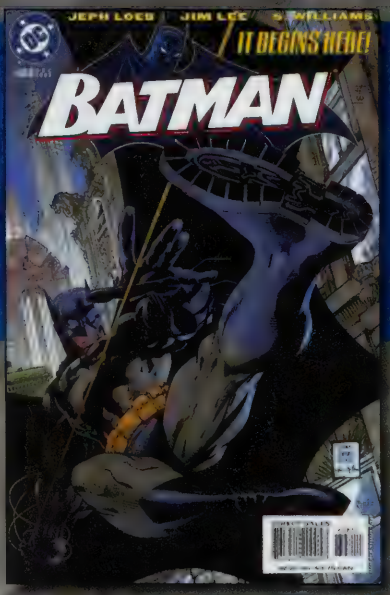


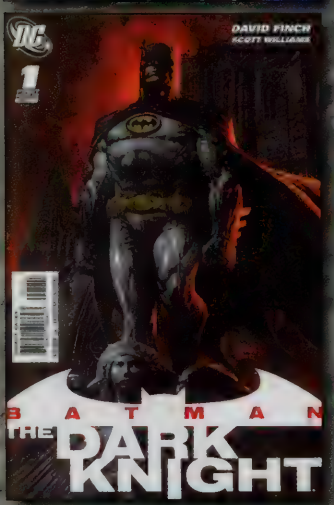


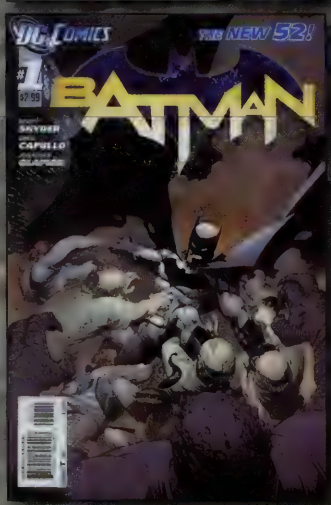


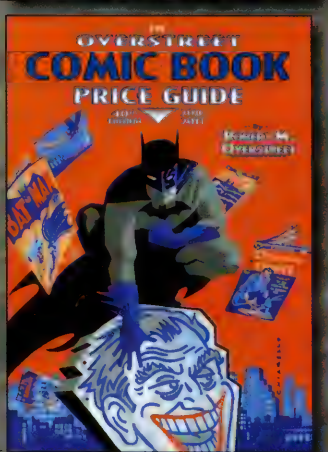


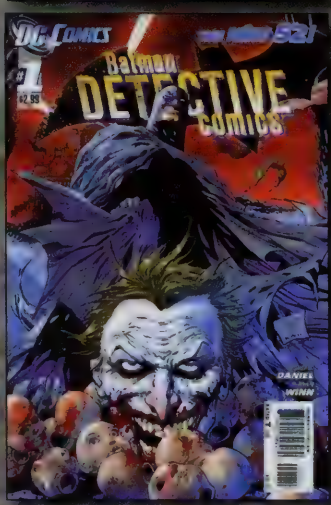
21ST CENTURY

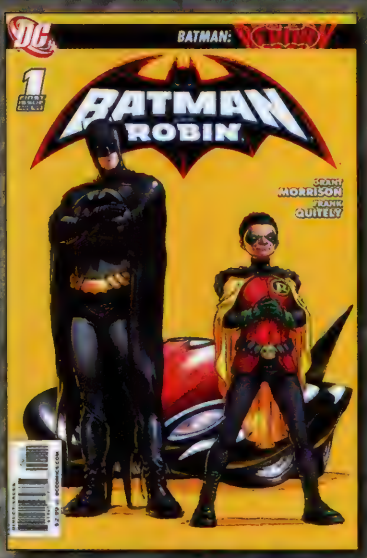












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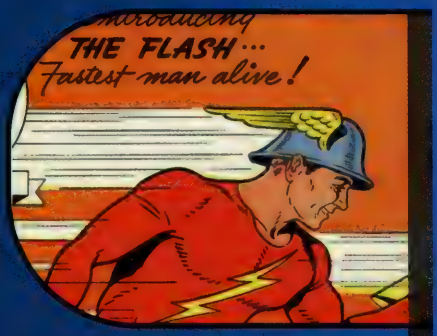
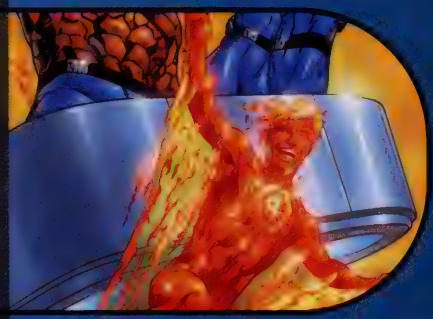
Collecting By Character:

REBOOTS





By Scott Braden & J.C. Vaughn

The success of rebooting characters and bringing them into a new comic book universe didn't start in 2011 with DC Comics' "New 52." In fact, this successful phenomenon is only the latest attempt to take established heroes, polish them up, and use them again in a whole new way.

The New 52 – with its young Superman and godly Wonder Woman – garnered major success, set the start of this incarnation of the DC universe just five years ago, and was ostensibly aimed at making the DC heroes more accessible to readers.

But truth be told, this is no different in concept than when Stan Lee and his "House of Ideas" created the "Marvel Age of Comics," or when DC editor Julie Schwartz heralded the Silver Age by rebooting the Golden Age incarnations of DC's top superheroes.

DC's New 52, accessible to a new generation of readers.

The excitement of DC's then-new Flash and Green Lantern in the dawn of the Silver Age led to a wholesale revival of the company's superhero line. Even the company's premiere super-team, the Justice League of America, was a modernization of the first superhero team, the Justice Society of America.

Marvel, for its part, sometimes used only the names of the characters, seeing the Golden Age android Human Torch replaced by the young Johnny Storm Human Torch in the pages of *Fantastic Four* #1. Not too many years after that, the names Vision and Black Widow resurfaced at Marvel with little relation to the originals.

When the character Captain America was revived in *Avengers* #4 and when the Sub-Mariner appeared in *Fantastic Four* #4, they were not new versions of the characters but instead were the originals. The story of Captain America's disappearance and his sidekick Bucky's demise at the end of World War II, though, did in fact create the need for a substantial retro-continuity change since in the real world Cap's adventures had continued through the end of the war and even experienced a strange, brief revival in the 1950s. It took many twists and turns over more than a decade of real time to fill in the continuity gaps and explain what had happened. The Sub-Mariner's youth and vitality decades later was an easier explanation. As a human-Atlantean hybrid, a mutant, he had a longer lifespan as well as incredible power.

Over a period of decades, DC has acquired entire catalogs of other comic book publishers and introduced them into their universe with varying levels of success. There were the Quality and Fawcett comics heroes, including Captain Marvel, Spy Smasher, Bulletman, Blackhawk, Uncle Sam, Black Condor, and Doll Man, among others.

Although no such time of heroes existed at Quality, Len Wein and Dick Dillin assembled the former Quality characters into *The Freedom Fighters*, who initially resided on Earth X (probably not the Marvel *Earth X*, but you can see how this might get confusing)

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The Quality characters found new life as the Freedom Fighters from Earth X.

and then were cast adrift for a period when *Crisis on Infinite Earths* came along and wiped out the multiple realities in favor of a unified world. Later they were simply integrated into DC's war-era heroes. They were also revived more recently as well.

For the 1980s (and in terms of lasting effect), reboots don't get much bigger than *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. It brought the characters onto a more manageable stage and gave them generational counterparts. For instance, you had the retired or semi-retired Golden Age Flash and Green Lantern occasionally popping up alongside their present day replacements.

Too many incarnations of the same character can necessitate some cleanup.

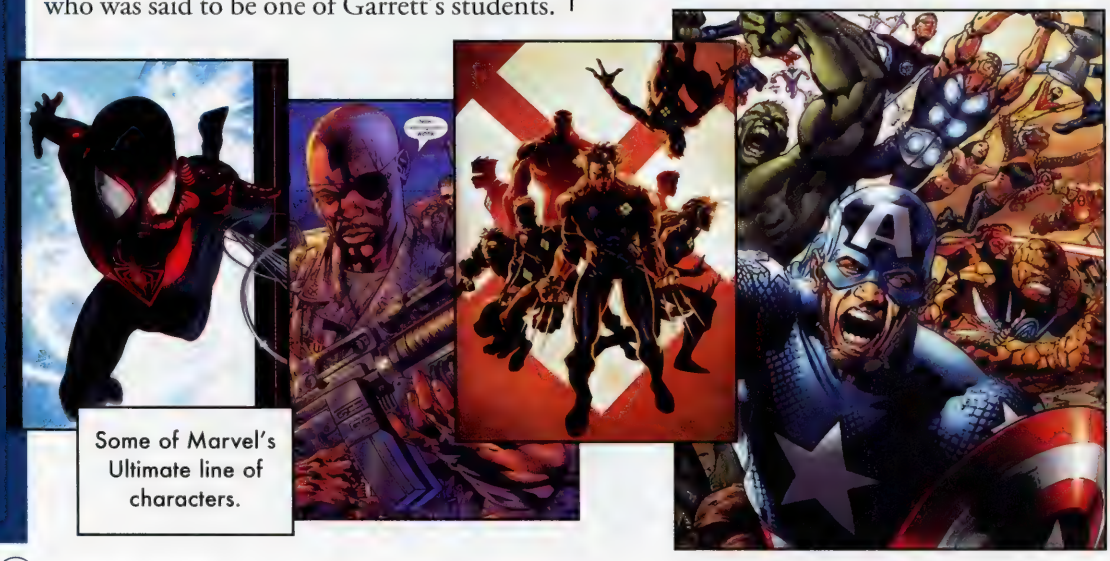
While streamlining their continuity, *Crisis* also was used to introduce another library of characters DC had acquired, the Charlton superheroes such as Captain Atom, Blue Beetle, The Question, Peacemaker, Judomaster, and Nightshade. Blue Beetle himself is a case study in reboots. The original Blue Beetle was Dan Garrett, whose adventures were published by Fox. When Fox quit publishing, they sold the character to Charlton. Eventually they launched a new Blue Beetle, Ted Kord, who was said to be one of Garrett's students.

It was the Ted Kord Blue Beetle who first appeared at DC, but years later, he would be replaced by young Jaime Reyes, who has survived long enough (just a few years really) to be reconfigured as part of the New 52.

And don't think that it's only DC doing it. Marvel's "Ultimate" universe gave us the first African-American Nick Fury and new versions of Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, The X-Men, the Avengers (called "The Ultimates") and so on. Then they killed the Ultimate version of Peter Parker and replaced him with another character as Spider-Man. As we've been wrapping up this book, Marvel has been announcing their big changes with their "Marvel Now" initiative.

Magnus Robot Fighter, *Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom*, and *Turok, Son of Stone*, had their original incarnations at Gold Key, second versions during Valiant's original incarnation, third versions during Valiant's Acclaim Comics era, and fourth versions from Dark Horse in 2010 (joined there by the Mighty Samson, who was not part of the Valiant revival). The fifth versions have just recently debuted, this time published by Dynamite Entertainment.

Valiant itself, of course, has been the

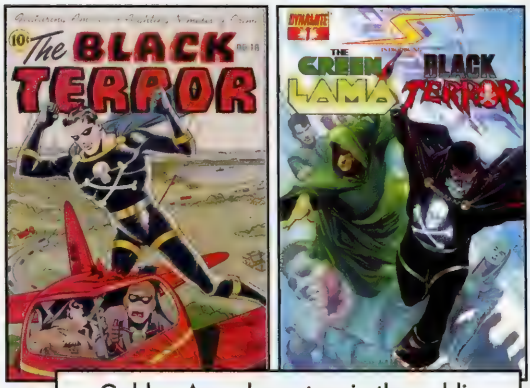


Some of Marvel's Ultimate line of characters.

subject of a revival, having launched initially the early '90s. They rebooted in the mid-1990s after being acquired by videogame maker Acclaim Entertainment. They attempted a reboot again in 2000 (with a great premise for how to do these sorts of things). The Valiant name and characters were acquired out of Acclaim's bankruptcy, and the new Valiant has launched a number of their familiar characters in new titles.

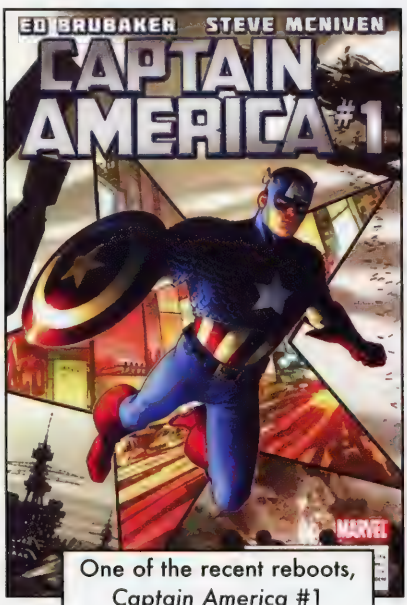
Dynamite has created universes out of many (at least theoretically) public domain Golden Age characters and Jack Kirby's creator-owned characters (Topps had a Kirbyverse previously). DC has licensed T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents. Archie has licensed their Red Circle superhero characters to DC in two separate instances and have now relaunched them themselves.

All of these instances of ret-con (retro continuity) or reboots provide natural jumping on or jumping off points for fans. Some of the fun may come in trying to figure out when a title has been changed just to get the spike in sales thought to accompany a new first issue, and when it's really starting over. Marvel's Captain America might be a great case study in this.



Golden Age characters in the public domain, like The Black Terror, were ripe for revival by Dynamite Entertainment.

The "Marvel Now" series *Captain America* will be the tenth ongoing title to feature the Star Spangled Avenger. While some of them have been short-lived, others have spanned decades. They include *Captain America Comics* (1941-1950, 1954), *Captain America* (1968-1996), *Captain America* (1996-1997, "Heroes Reborn"), *Captain America* (1998-2002, "Heroes Return"), Captain *America: Sentinel of Liberty* (1998-1999), *Captain America* (2002-2004, "Marvel Knights"), Captain *America and The Falcon* (2004-2005), and *Captain America* (2005 - 2011).



One of the recent reboots, Captain America #1 from 2011.

Following *Captain America* #50, the 2005 series took the cumulative issues and adopted the number of the 1968 series, making the following issue *Captain America* #600 in keeping with the character's raised profile, Marvel's 70th corporate anniversary, and the then-upcoming Marvel Studios *Captain America* film.

Following *Captain America* #619, Marvel decided to introduce a new Captain America series with *Captain America* #1 (the ninth series), so *Captain America* (eighth series) changed its title to *Captain America & Bucky* with #620, followed by *Captain America & Hawkeye* (one story arc), *Captain America & Iron Man* (one story arc), *Captain America & Namor* (one issue), and *Captain America & Black Widow* (one story arc).

Of these, *Captain America Comics* and the Silver Age *Captain America* represent two different takes on the same character, with the anomalies of the 1950s revival explained away with new story elements later. After that, the only distinctly different Cap prior to "Marvel Now" was the "Heroes Reborn" version, although the Marvel Knights version didn't entirely square with other stories.

Regardless, there's fun to be had in collecting any or all of them. Even if you can't quite figure them all out.

In the Digital Age, What Is Original Art?

By J.C. Vaughn & Scott Braden

For collectors of original comic art — and indeed art of many different media — the digital age seems to have thrown a monkey wrench into the works. Even when traditional elements are part of the process, the existence of one, true original can be in doubt. To go a step further, though, when a piece is created on a screen and then output, what truly is an original? As it turns out, this is not a new query.

"The problem goes back to the beginnings of print-making. A print maker, a lithographer or silk screen artist, all would insist that their art is not complete until it is printed. And that means every copy of the print is an original," said writer-artist Mark Wheatley, a veteran comic book creator known for his work on *Mars*, *Tarzan*, and *Breathtaker*, among other projects.

"But the art world prefers to think of an original as being unique. And so a compromise was worked out that the artist would sign and number and occasionally remarque the prints to make them originals. In the digital realm, things are much the same. There can be an infinite number of digital originals. A first generation digital image would be an original source. Once the image is copied and re-saved, we are into second generation images and can ignore those. But all the first generation images are originals. Doesn't matter, really, because what most people really want is something unique," he said.

A pencil page from Mark Wheatley's "Skultar" (*Dark Horse Presents*).

Collectors of original comic book art know that there are differences between the work done in the 1930s and work done today. For instance, in addition to a change in the physical size of the pages, there's a major difference in how lettering is done. Most comic pages through the early 1990s were done with hand lettering or paste-up balloons. With the exception of a few practitioners, most modern lettering is done on the computer. The art itself is not touched in the process.

Additionally, many modern craftsmen know very well what their colleagues will bring to the table. An artist such as Greg Land, for example, understanding what is expected of modern colorists, provides a very minimal amount of illustration on the page compared to someone like Joe Kubert. The final result of Land's work is often considered breathtaking, but those who look for that level of work on his penciled and inked pages may be disappointed. And of course that's just one example.

Consider this: a pencil artist finishes his page. He or she scans it and delivers it electronically to the inker. The inker could actually print it out, ink that printout, scan it, and send it to the colorist. The colorist could then complete his or her work, either on the computer screen (more likely) or on the printout (not as likely), and then send it to the letterer, who plies his or her craft.

So, which page in that process is "the" original? Our first inclination is to say the pencil artist's page, but then what about the inker's page, which is clearly a unique, creative part of the process? This is not something either artists

or collectors have answered to everyone's satisfaction yet. One thing we know is that whatever the method or process, there's still a lot of work that goes into making a comic book page.

Brent Anderson is another veteran comic book illustrator, whose credits stretch from Pacific Comics' *Somerset Holmes* and Marvel's *Ka-Zar* to his current long run on *Kurt Busiek's Astro City* at DC, and he knows what goes into the work. "The monthly schedule adhered to by the biggest comics publishers require the artist(s) to produce 20 to 24 pages of printable material approximately every 30 days. Since each page averages four to five panels per page, and since each panel has anywhere from one to five or more visual elements, there are often as many as 300 separate visual elements in the 'average' comic story. This is a lot of work, especially if the artist can't just 'make it up' on the fly and needs to do a little research. Personally, and I'm not sure if I'm 'average,' it takes me at least six weeks to produce 24 finished *Astro City* pages, four weeks to pencil same for another artist to finish, and two weeks to lay out the basic storytelling for someone else to finish. Depending on mitigating factors a single page could take as little as a day-and-a-half or as much as a week to finish," he said.

The finished art from the same page of Skultar.

He said that the positive aspects of creating comic book work digitally is the freedom to undo 32 brush strokes of an unsuccessful drawing, do very quick ink fills, and to erase pages with the click of a button. It's clean, no hand-washing, and doing detailed work is easier when one can enlarge the image to any size on the monitor. There are negatives, however.

"Not having the same tactile visceral feeling of pencil, pens and ink on paper," Anderson continued. "[There are] no originals at the end of the process, [there's a] reliance on a massive technological foundation to access the work and the need to back up files constantly and consistently," he said.

According to Anderson, he started the transition to digital in the late spring of 2009, using Corel Painter 11, a much more artistic intuitive approach to digital drawing and painting than was available in Photoshop, the industry standard, at the time.

"My first published digital work was *Astro City: Dark Age Book 4* #1 (March 2010). I still do pencil storytelling layouts on paper, but after those sketches are scanned into the computer, everything else is done using the digital tools in Painter," he said.

With this new way of producing comic book artwork, in terms of original art, how does it change the paradigm for collectors? What do creators like Anderson or Wheatley sell to art collectors?

"When I got right down to answering the question 'Why do I do comics?' I came to one conclusion: I don't draw comics to create original art; I draw comics art as a means to an end, to publish and print comic stories. The artwork is a means to an end, a by-product, a disposable step toward the ultimate goal. Disposing of the original art has always been a major pain and, conversely, a major delight when the right piece of art was delivered into the right hands," Anderson said.

For his part, Wheatley said he makes his prints unique. "Just like the traditional print makers — we sign, number and remarque the prints. Other artists have gone out of their way to have some physical piece of art, used in making the final, digital image. But I think that is a bit forced and won't survive, except as needed in specific cases — where a physical brush stroke is absolutely what is needed to make the image work. The fact is, physical art work is going to become much more rare," he said.

I AM GROOT!

By Mark Squirek

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As a member of the Guardians of the Galaxy, the alien Groot has died many ways. He's been blown up a couple of times and even set on fire. Each time this happens the mighty being from the Planet X has found a way back to sentient life. As amazing as his reincarnations become, no comeback has ever been as spectacular as his very first one.

A long time ago, before Groot became a good tree and a valued member of a prestigious interplanetary patrol team, he was a scientist. An evil scientist, one sent to Earth with an agenda.

That's hard to come back from.

Right before Marvel found the key to the universe with the Silver Age debut of the *Fantastic Four* in 1961, the company was publishing stories based in romance, westerns, horror, science-fiction and tales of knights.

Even with that variety, many fans look to this period as "The Marvel Age of Monsters."

Which stands to reason as the monsters were extraordinary! They had names like Goo-Gam, Gorgilla, Kraa, Gargantus, Brutto, and of course Fin Fang Foom. These alliterative abominations came from space, the laboratories of crazed scientists, and from underground where they had been sleeping peacefully until an atomic bomb awakened them from their hibernation.

Groot was once one of them: A monster, an alien, and an evil scientist to boot!

The story of how and why he came to Earth dates back to his often forgotten first appearance in the opening story in *Tales to Astonish* #13 (November 1960), "*I Challenged... Groot! The Monster from Planet X!*"

This giant tree of a man named Groot has come to Earth to capture a sampling of its inhabitants and take them back home to Planet X. He plans to place humans in a zoo as well as experiment on them.

The story is so tight, so succinct and perfect that it could have easily been made into a film. Written by Stan Lee and Larry Lieber with art by Jack Kirby and Dick Ayers, it hits every classic note found in many of the low budget sci-fi movies of the day.

It has absolutely everything. The milquetoast scientist, the nagging spouse, the invader who can't be stopped by the guns, fire or weapons, the scientist finding a wildly original way to stop the menace, and the alien dying at the end.

The story may seem familiar, but there is something indefinably special about what the creators did. There is a strange heart inside the tale. When Groot lies dead at the end, you feel sadness in the same way that you feel for King Kong when he is lying on the pavement in Manhattan.

With Marvel Studios' *Guardians of the Galaxy* due to hit theaters August 1, 2014, it may prove interesting to watch the price of this first appearance issue.

Mark Squirek, an Overstreet Advisor, is an accomplished actor and playwright. He is also a regular columnist the New York Journal of Books and for Scoop.

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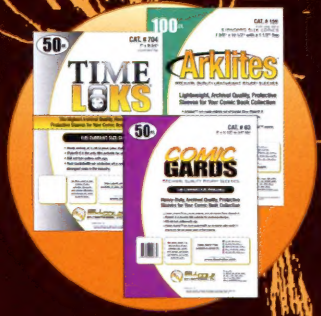

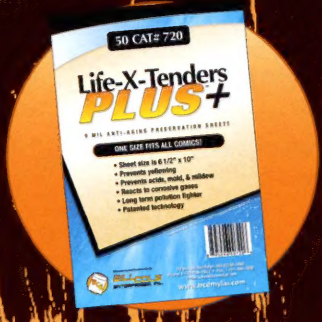

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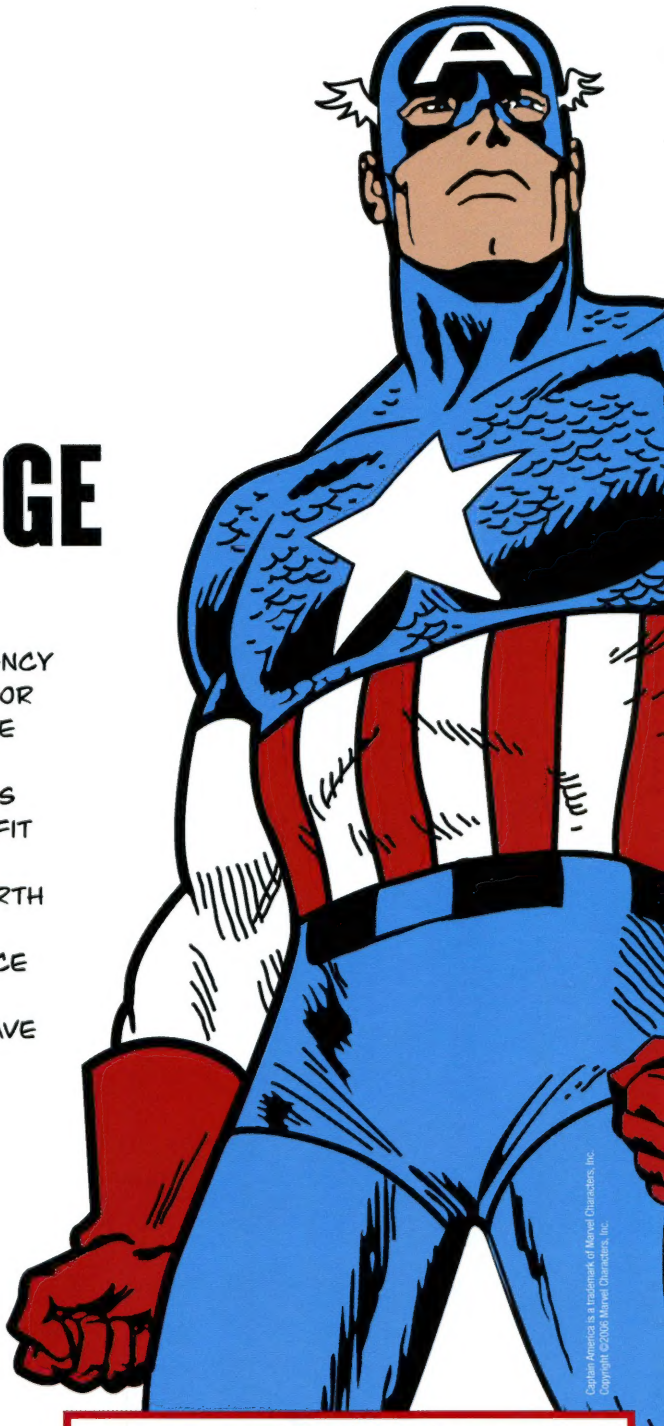

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